



A.G. on Ag A.G. on Ag

An Update from Secretary Kawamura

October 2006: NASDA, Farm Bill, San Joaquin Valley, Legislation & Community Colleges

My recent trip to the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) annual meeting in Norfolk, Virginia, focused primarily on farm bill policy. The state of California was the first organized voice to prepare formal farm bill recommendations. Due to the punctuality and breadth of our position, California will have direct influence in shaping this important national policy. As the California delegate, my goal was to propose amendments to the [NASDA farm bill](#) position paper so it best represented California's interests.

California had a strong presence in these discussions with our state submitting 13 of the initial 38 NASDA amendments, covering almost every title of the farm bill. All but one of our amendments was adopted. Attendees at the [farm bill listening sessions](#) and collaborating state agencies, helped us to develop California's recommendations. After the NASDA meeting we delivered these amendments to members of Congress.

Embedded in the farm bill position paper, as well as our NASDA amendments, was the basic principle for [HR 4049](#). This legislation will help provide additional funds for states to conduct early pest detection. NASDA unanimously accepted this proposal and also voted to send a letter of support for HR 4049 to Congress. This effort was successful due to the dynamic presentation by Greg Van Wassenhove, Commissioner of the [Santa Clara County Division of Agriculture](#), and the time dedicated to this proposal by so many agricultural commissioners. Following the NASDA meeting, Robert Tse, CDFA Trade Director, accompanied Bob Wynn, our Pierce's Disease Statewide Coordinator, spoke with congressional staff and the President's Office of Management and Budget about full funding for the [Pierce's Disease Control Program](#).

On a separate note, the [California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley](#) has released the final version of the Strategic Action Proposal aimed at the economic development of the San Joaquin Valley. The proposal was prepared in response to the Governor's [Executive Order S-5-05](#) and was developed based on recommendations from work groups, public forums, roundtables and consultation with state legislative and congressional representatives from the San Joaquin Valley. This document is open for public review until October 26, 2006, at which time all suggestions will be considered, the plan will be finalized and then sent to the Governor's Office.

Some of the major proposals affecting agriculture include:

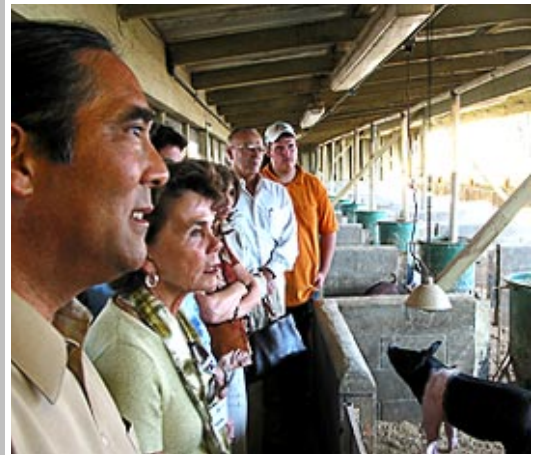
- Creating a demand-driven workforce system including high quality vocational training.
- Establishing and implementing conservation plans for important agricultural lands.
- Developing a long-range plan to enhance the vitality and sustainability of agriculture.
- Completing the Upper San Joaquin Basin Project.
- Establishing and implementing an energy plan to optimize efficiencies.
- Expanding surface water storage, enhancing surface and groundwater quality, and strengthening flood control and levee protection.



Secretary Kawamura is interviewed during last month's NASDA meeting in Virginia. Photo: R. Tse / USDA

If you wish to review this [document](#) and then provide comments, please send them to [JonnaLee Henderson](#), CDFA policy analyst. You may also attend the Partnership Board's public forum at 1 PM on October 26, 2006, at California State University Fresno, [Smittcamp Alumni House](#).

Highlighting the current opportunities in agricultural career technical education through California's community college system, the [California State Board of Food and Agriculture](#) held their September meeting with members of the Board of Governors for the California Community Colleges (CCC) at Modesto Junior College. Among the speakers were Secretary Victoria Bradshaw with the Labor and Workforce Development Agency and Dennis Gudgel, Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner. Few Californians realize the state has an acute worker shortage in critical jobs in agriculture, ranging from agricultural power machine mechanics to crop specialists. Our inability to fill these positions could threaten California's recognized leadership in agricultural production. To ensure workforce readiness in this fast-paced and complex industry will require thoughtful public investment in training along with research and development. The boards will aim to cooperate in leveraging existing CCC programs and resources for enhanced student offerings in agriculture and related courses.



Secretary Kawamura; Member Benita Haley, Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges; President Al Montna, State Board of Food and Agriculture; and a Modesto JC student visit the junior college swine unit as part of their campus tour. Photo: J. Hendricks / CDFA



(L-R) Senator Denise Ducheny, Ms. Luawanna Hallstrom for Oceanside Produce and Secretary Kawamura at Oceanside Produce's tomato farm in Oceanside, San Diego County, during the farmworker bill signing ceremony. Photo: N. Lungren / CDFA

And finally, I was pleased to join State Senator Denise Ducheny on September 28 in San Diego County, to announce the Governor had signed [bills](#) that will benefit farm workers and ultimately increase the national and global competitiveness of California's agricultural industry.

As always, thank you for your support. Feel free to contact my office with any questions or concerns.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "A.G. Kawamura".

A.G. Kawamura
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